

Present: Tom Busa, Richard Bowen, Stephen Steele, Elizabeth McClung, David Powell, Ben Thomas, Victor Garofalo. Steve Carluccio (later)

David Powell: move to approve minutes from 10/29

Tom Busa: second

6-0

David Powell: move to approve minutes from 11/2

Tom Busa: second

6-0

David Powell: move to approve minutes from 11/12

Tom Busa: second

6-0

Planning Board: Amy Lloyd, Jeffrey Cohen

- Deficiencies in the zones, need to update business zones
- People are aware of them
- Hope to put out to bid to do this work
- Planning boards usually put things out to contract
- Have a scope, very rough draft, want to know what FinCom would want in a scope
- Scope: originally Shawsheen to Hillside, expand it through Town Center and include all business districts, including historic district, along Great Road, not including North Road.
- Funding will be required to do this.
- Tom: seemed like voters wanted to see something done.
- Must find the funding solution. Probably too preliminary to know what the cost would be.
- Not rushed into, comprehensive way, likely \$100K-\$150K, would include consultant doing everything. Oversight and photocopying by town.
- They would present at public hearings, do basic reconnaissance, write final document that appears on the warrant. Everything. Data gathering, strategy, various options
- Not prescribing a particular approach since best practice has changed so much.
- New base district? Overlay? Change to existing base districts?
- Tom: timeline?
- Once awarded, up to 18 months.
- So if funding now, it would be Town Meeting 2017.

- Would like to get it in the pipeline as soon as possible.
- Rich: comprehensive plan done, implementing is the next phase. Support this approach. The staff has other things to do. If it's over two years, is that two years of appropriations to the operating budget?
- Also curious about North Road, section right at the end of Great Road, maybe they should be included.
- Currently North Road Overlay, including Bedford Farms, the hotel, etc.
- Rich: feel this should be part of it all. Adding 10K and getting it done would be better than getting caught at another town meeting with an issue because it wasn't done.
- Dave: Don't we have to look at all the districts like near route 3? Trying to get re-zoned to industrial. We're addressing that now.
- South Road: limited business. Its 4 houses. Would like to address that too. Some residences zoned as limited business because lines have been drawn straight, etc.
- Dave: let's get North Road part, all limited business districts.

Tasks:

- 1) Basic reconnaissance, identify where business applies
 - 2) Zoning diagnostic, analysis of existing bylaw, interviews, standards analysis of permitting process, preliminary list of zoning fixes, involve key stake holders, including property owners
 - 3) Data gathering and analysis
 - 4) Zoning strategy report
 - 5) Drafting of zoning amendments
 - 6) Final document, warrant article, two more public hearings
- Dave: if we go through that process, will that satisfy everyone's concerns from Town Meeting? like aesthetics
 - Wouldn't be able to address the discomfort with change in and of itself. need to continue to hold public hearings that are well-publicized.
 - Overlay (a lot of control) versus site plan review (little control)
 - Plan calls for bringing stores closer to the street, like Lexington Center, the pedestrian feel
 - Dave: anything put in place won't be imposed on whatever is already in place?
 - Correct. could provide incentives
 - Governor's Enterprise Program (perhaps) directly through the Governor's office, some opportunity for some money for a market study, trying to offset some of the cost.
 - Victor: If done as a separate article, the money could be carried forward. If operating budget, money can't be put forward for multiple years. Two years to complete it without going in front of Selectmen, can be up to five years. If passes, the money is available July 1. Unless free cash is used.
 - Tom: not a capital article

- Assume the payments would be phased.
- Could not be prepaid. Could put incremental deposits down though. Could use Reserve Funds to get it started. Depends on dollar amount. It's not an unanticipated expense, but could do it.
- Ben: trying to understand the timeline better. 18 months include public hearings?
- Yes, from the time the contractor starts. Hearings come throughout the process.
- Ben: so money July 1, could present at Spring 2018
- Yes
- Ben: any approach acceptable? Some oversight, though, so it's reasonable?
- Yes, they have to.
- Ben: how does it interact with other projects? Any interlocking pieces with industrial zoning that could tie things up?
- No, plan to put industrial zoning up to town meeting this spring. Not aware of anything that would interfere with this step.
- Ben: Do it right, complete, we are going to live with this for a long time.
- We hope for something for spring of 2017.
- Glen thought that because of the overlay that the North Road would add complexity towards the study.
- New England Nursery, Daycare, Bieren's all residential, grandfathered in as business.
- Basically four areas: eastern Great Road, North Road, historic area, Marketplace/CVS
- Ben: economic coordinator at 80%, not looking to go more. Can she help you?
- How much of her time would you need.
- She is kept in the loop. Staff consults with her.
- Steve Steele: if at 2015 Town Meeting, could start July first, 18 months out would be brought at Spring 18 Town Meeting. We're losing 6 months just sitting here.
- Will take some time ironing out the details.
- Victor: can't sign off on a contract unless the money for the entire project is approved, fully funded, as of July 1.
- Steve: would be in favor of a separate article.
- would like to consult with FinCom about the warrant phrasing for the article, vetting
- Victor: Town Counsel would be the appropriate way to go.
- outdoor seating area by B-Good

Schools Jon Sills and Michael McAllister

- Goal: just the big picture
- Want uneventful budget season.
- will come with FTE later

- outlines of policy for funds balance, will be presented next time
- FY'17 \$37,614,091 which is 4.25% increase over FY'16.
- level funding for supplies
- 76.6% salaries. COLA increases and steps/lanes were about 50-50
- Shown with no additional FTEs added.
- operating expenses down (leases for iPads lower now)
- regular transportation has gone up, especially athletics transportation
- SPED out of district 5.52% increase
- CASE used to charge in arrears, but now it has to be like the others now, real-time
- so this is based on a headcount projection
- same with transportation
- Ben: have we looked at other vendors?
- Do a contract every three years. Have done 4, haven't received any other bidders.
- Ben: SPED OOD: since we have done so much in-house, when do we do more of this in-house to save the transportation?
- Salary offsets: from circuit breaker. much is Hanscom money, some federal grants, some nursery school receipts, METCO, some smaller grants
- operating expenses offsets: building rental account,
- SPED OOD offsets: circuit breaker money
- Enrollment projections: K-12 experiencing increases, will hit Lane school in a year or so. Trying to budget well this year since additional demands are coming.
- Update on enrollment study by NESDEC. Last three months up to September 580-625K average housing price. Number of move-ins in that corner is 129. Like a few years ago.
- Actual for this year: 2508. Next year predicted to be 2527.
- Brought a lot of OOD in-house instead from 116 2006 down to 77 in 2015
- Steve: can we add an occupancy factor of bringing in OOD? There is a cost to space.

Challenges:

- Enrollment pressure at Davis, wanted a third modular. Using an interventionist instead now, may be good. We are evaluating this now.
- Two different autism programs, moderately ones integrated into regular classroom with aid, and also intensive SAIL program. anticipate another teacher
- Additional Title 1 funds of about \$100K, used it for ELL that grew from 5.2 to 7%
- Added .6 ELL
- Our low income numbers dipped by about 13.6 to 13.1% of our population: anticipating losing some of that money. Want to sustain that ELL.
- Now have 6.0 FTEs: 1.6 Lane, 2.0 at Davis, 1.0 JGMS, 1.0 BHS about 180 kids ELL

- Looking for money to have an ELA curriculum leader. Last year we hired back a retired ELA teacher at .2 to have some of this. Want full-time ELA K-12 already have .4 available, so looking for .6 FTE.
- Clerical support for facilities and technology for upcoming capital projects, and since increasing technology in the buildings.
- want more iPads still
- robotics, STEM initiative
- 3.2 to 3.5 FTEs total.
- Ben: let's see the cost savings
- Steve Carluccio: sure iPads are the right devices? Other tablets have more functionality. Huge cost for the iPad brand. Something more full-functioning?
- Yes, we consider that strongly every year. Will come back with that answer.
- Is the METCO number static? What is it? Does that impact our request for state funds? 97 overall
- How is the interventionist being used at Davis? clusters for ELL, working on reading and math instruction
- Have you considered Chrome Books?
- Why wouldn't this be part of your tech request? leasing, separate
- iPad usage from parent perspective., text books
- Rich: approach here is bottom up, talk about what you would like to have.
- Other approach is top down. Social Security increase is zero. Looking at some of the external benchmarks is in order. what is the average teacher salary: Bedford versus other surrounding towns. The numbers seem high compared with the rest of the world in terms of salary increases. Lots of people on fixed incomes or small increase in compensation. Why does this group get more than any other group in Massachusetts?
- Ben: We've removed lots of your high cost, variable items. Utilities, building overhaul, capital items, so what's left is salaries and operating supplies. So given all the other groups in the MA economy that can do with less than 3.72%, how do you justify this?
- Tom: thank you for the effort of getting this stuff in advance. Good to go through most of this early. Some questions. If this were something you were going to go forward with what would the ball park value be for this?
- \$250 for the whole page, but there are supplies that are not reflected there. Overall expansion would be that plus \$172K.
- \$370-400K total.
- Tom: for maintenance of services: add that in and it would be 5.25-5.75% increase. New growth usually is about 3.5% with prop 2.5. We shouldn't be growing beyond 3.5%. So you're growing 4.25%... We're locked into your negotiated contracts. So when you increase these salaries beyond 3.5% this has to be negotiated more in line. How does this line continually grow? We have to look at is as growing only 3% for steps AND COLA. We won't have these unusually growth years going forward. This puts so much pressure on all the other budgets.

- Looking at SPED headcounts: if you look at headcounts it's great. If you look at cost, the OOD why a 300K increase when the number is flat or down? large transportation increase as well for the number of students staying the same or moving down.
- Hanscom offset of 513K. 135 students. 97 students for METCO.
- Half of the expenses for METCO are bus transportation. So we have 30K to educate those children. Look into that.
- Rich: appreciate this form of presentation. Can't let it grow: must be stabilized at 3.5%
- Steve Carluccio: the huge transportation cost increase is from what? No fuel savings?
- our third year contract, up 3% from the local transportation
- OOD transport based on our CASE collaborative assessment
- Got back around 10K savings from last year. That's been applied.
- Transportation: not much competitive bidding.
- <72 kids transported at \$1M
- 16 kids in CASE but they do all the transport.
- Steve Steele:
- How are we progressing on the building?
- We're in the process

Model: Victor

- recap sheet approved
- tax rate approved
- base levy has increased based on final new growth number
- retirement was 6.1%, 20K higher than the estimate: this is the final number
- utilities: used 2%, still comfortable with that
- road resurfacing increased 50K
- capital article being carried over as same from last year
- stabilization fund amount 662,858
- leaves 3,640,850 Amount of Unused Levy to leave for FY
- at 2.5% would takes \$1,365, 285, leaves \$680K
- 4.25% for schools: not enough to cover that.
- State aid might change. New growth should stay the same. Community Preservation match came in at about 33 or 34%, about 80K more, leaves more money for CP projects. Might use more cash, less borrowing.
- Steve C: with assessor overlay, talk about budgeting for interest, like 50K. Didn't feel we really had to budget for that. Is that false? Maybe?
- Somewhat false. Can't pay 2003 with surplus from another year. Need funds re-appropriated at town meeting. Can only overspend overlay: interest is a completely different story. Cannot use overlay for that.
- Assessors may release some. We need 300K to balance the capital budget. Could come from overlay surplus.
- If you look at guideline allocation, did 2.5% everywhere else, exclude schools:
- \$463270.

- Should we put a placeholder for Planning? 150K?
- budgeted 7% for health insurance total: think that's OK, no surprise
- General insurance: 6% is not a problem.
- If capital endorses capital plan as presented, there are projects presented to be borrowed: \$76,780, others can be covered with water and sewer rates.
- Library account: about 750K - 1M in a special revenue fund. Could fund books. Maybe reallocate book money to salaries, then fund books through that.
- 2.5% of library is about 28K
- Tom: for now how about:
- \$1,420,271 available, represents 3.94% increase to schools
- no new FTEs in this baseline
- capital at last year's number still
- If 3.5% for schools, would leave \$157,450 in surplus minus 78K for debt
- 2.5% to all without schools,
- 150K for planning (placeholder) to put in page 10 "other projects"
- No change in capital.
- Need assessors in to discuss overlay
- Ben: selectmen's reaffirmed tax rates. gas leaks issues.
- ZBA resident came as a private resident saying the assessments for commercial that weren't assessed consistently.

Motion to adjourn: Ben Thomas

Second; Dave Powell

7-0

10:15 PM